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UNCLAS TUNIS 000889

SIPDIS

S/GWI FOR BENNETT AND GHORI; ALSO FOR NEA/MAG

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREL KWMN KPAQ PHUM TS

SUBJECT: PLACEMENT OF OP-ED ON THE INTERNATIONAL DAY FOR THE ELIMINATION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

Ref: A) Tunis 886  
B) STATE 120322

Sensitive but Unclassified. Please protect accordingly.

¶1. (U) Per paragraph four of Ref. A, post adapted S/GWI's suggested op-ed for relevance to Tunisia, condensing it and noting that "Tunisia has a long tradition of protecting women's rights for which it can be justifiably proud, but violence is a global problem and it requires international solutions." The reputable and widely read newspapers As-Sabah (Arabic-language daily) and its sister French-language daily Le Temps, which have a combined daily circulation of 90,000 readers, published front-page headers about the editorial on December 2.

¶2. (U) The articles mentioned Ambassador Gray by name and title in the byline, and each featured a photo of the Ambassador downloaded from the Embassy's public website both on the front and inside pages. The op-ed, which was printed in full using the Embassy's provided translation, called for the elimination of all forms of violence against women while praising Tunisia for its strong history of support for women's rights. Accordingly, the headline in As-Sabah read, "Tunisia has a long tradition of protecting women's rights for which it can be justifiably proud", and the headline in Le Temps was "Elimination of violence against women in the world: Tunisian secular traditions for the protection of women's rights."

¶3. (SBU) The Tunisian Association of Democratic Women (ATFD) called Post's Human Rights Officer to praise the Ambassador's editorial, and stated that while the international community and activists tend to focus discourse on a "male-centric" version of human rights, her association was glad to see the Ambassador speak specifically and publically about the rights of women. Additionally, several foreign diplomats working on human rights in Tunisia communicated their pleasure at seeing the op-ed.

DESJARDINS